



Newsletter

Number 290, April 2023

Carmel OCDS Community Meeting

Sunday 2 April 2023

12:00pm Formation Groups

1pm Community Meeting

Welcome & opening prayers

Roll call & apologies

Minutes of previous meeting

Treasurer's report, Correspondence

General business, General discussion

Closing prayers

1:45pm Community Formation

St Thérèse of Lisieux: "Story of a Soul"

(Community Study: See Newsletter, pp.2-3)

2:30pm Father's Teaching

Divine Office in Chapel

Leader: Claire, Reader: Megan

Afternoon Tea

Prep. & Serving: Christine & Marian

Dishes: Eddie & Maureen



Bethany Day

Tuesday 18 April 2023

(10:30am – 1:00pm)

10:30am Morning Tea

11:00am DVD

11:45am Chapel – Quiet Prayer

12:15pm BYO Lunch

Birthdays

Mary O'Boyle Monday 3 April

Noeline Sapwell Wednesday 12 April



NZ OCDS Website: www.carmel.org.nz

April: Dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament

Greetings dear brothers & sisters in Carmel,

Here is our April newsletter, please remember to bring it to our Meeting as you will need it for our Formation session. Also, a reminder that **our May meeting will be on April 30th** as Fr Paul Hancock will visit with us.

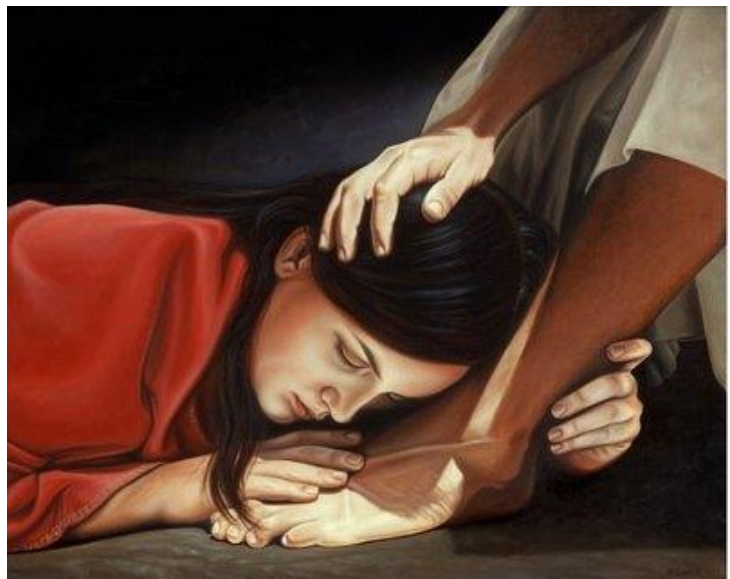
BETHANY - six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany to Martha, Mary and Lazarus. It is there that Mary anointed Jesus' feet; they were his dearest friends and followers. I share with you here a meditation by **Charles Foucault** which I think is so very apt for contemplating during the oh so sacred Holy Week.

"My God, on that evening... of love and of grief, that evening of sweetness because you are present, of sorrow because you are so close to death and suffering, Mary spreads perfume upon your feet and upon your head... She pours it over your feet, spilling the perfume and breaking its container, and she gives you her whole being, body and soul, heart and mind: she gives you all that she is: she pours out the perfume and breaks its container... She saves nothing, she gives all that she is and all that she has... O Jesus, I want to give myself to you as that holy woman gave herself, without holding back anything either of myself or for myself... 'Behold I come to do your will.' Lord, make my gift complete so that I give you my whole self and everything that belongs to me as well, the perfume, the container, my soul and body, everything."

May Jesus fill us with his transforming LOVE in these days,

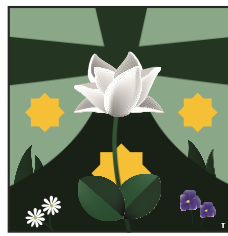
Mary O'Boyle, OCDS

(President, Peace of Christ Community, Christchurch)



April quote from St Teresa of Jesus:

"When you receive Holy Communion, close your bodily eyes so you may open the eyes of your soul. Then, look upon Jesus in the centre of your heart."



READING OF THE WRITINGS OF THÉRÈSE OF THE CHILD JESUS (2023: MANUSCRIPT A) Study guide 3: The grace of Christmas (Ms A, 44r-45v)

Proposal for the Community meeting:

1. Reading of the text.
2. One of the participants, who has already prepared his contribution, presents the text with the help of the reading schedule (and other supports, if necessary).
3. Community dialogue on the text.
It would be good if the community meeting was preceded by a personal reading and meditation on the text of Thérèse.

MANUSCRIPT A, 44r-45v

(ICS English translation pp. 93 – 99)

When Marie entered Carmel, I was still very scrupulous. No longer able to confide in her I turned toward heaven. I addressed myself to the four angels who had preceded me there, for I thought that these innocent souls, having never known troubles or fear, would have pity on their poor little sister who was suffering on earth. I spoke to them with the simplicity of a child, pointing out that being the youngest of the family, I was always the most loved, the most covered with my sisters' tender cares, that if they had remained on earth they, too, would have given me proofs of their affection. Their departure for heaven did not appear to me as a reason for forgetting me; on the contrary, finding themselves in a position to draw from the divine treasures, they had to take *peace* for me from these treasures and thus show me that in heaven they still knew how to love! The answer was not long in coming, for soon peace came to inundate my soul with its delightful waves, and I knew then that if I was loved on earth, I was also loved in heaven. Since that moment, my devotion for my little brothers and sisters has grown and I love to hold dialogues with them frequently, to speak with them about the sadness of our exile, about my desire to join them soon in the Fatherland!

Although God showered His graces upon me, it wasn't because I merited them because I was still very imperfect. I had a great desire, it is true, to practice [44v°] virtue, but I went about it in a strange way. Being the youngest in the family, I wasn't accustomed to doing things for myself. Céline tidied up the room in which we slept, and I myself didn't do any housework whatsoever. After Marie's entrance into Carmel, it sometimes happened that I tried to make up the bed to please God, or else in the evening, when Céline was away, I'd bring in her plants. But as I already said, it was for *God alone* I was doing these things and should not have expected any *thanks* from creatures. Alas, it was just the opposite. If Céline was unfortunate enough not to seem happy or surprised because of these little services, I became unhappy and proved it by my tears.

I was really unbearable because of my extreme touchiness; if I happened to cause anyone I loved some little trouble, even unwittingly, instead of forgetting about it and not *crying*, which made matters worse, I *cried* like a Magdalene and then when I began to cheer up, I'd begin *to cry again for having cried*. All arguments were useless; I was quite unable to correct this terrible fault. I really don't know how I could entertain the thought of entering Carmel when I was still in the *swaddling clothes of a child!* God would have to work a little miracle to make me *grow up* in an instant, and this miracle He performed on that unforgettable Christmas day. On that luminous *night* which sheds such light on the delights of the Holy Trinity, Jesus, the gentle, *little* Child of only one hour, changed the *night* of my soul into rays of light. On that night when He made Himself subject to *weakness* and suffering for love of me, He made me *strong* and courageous, arming me with His weapons. Since that night I have never been defeated in any combat, but rather walked from victory to victory, beginning, so to speak, "*to run as a giant!*" [45r°] The source of my tears was dried up and has since reopened rarely and with great difficulty. This justified what was often said to me: "You cry so much during your childhood, you'll no longer have tears to shed later on!"

It was December 25, 1886, that I received the grace of leaving my childhood, in a word, the grace of my complete conversion. We had come back from Midnight Mass where I had the happiness of receiving the *strong* and *powerful* God. Upon arriving at Les Buissonnets, I used to love to take my shoes from the chimney corner and examine the presents in them; this old custom had given us so much joy in our youth that Céline wanted to continue treating me as a baby since I was the youngest in the family. Papa had always loved to see my happiness and listen to my cries of delight as I drew each surprise from the *magic shoes*, and my dear King's gaiety increased my own happiness very much. However, Jesus desired to show me that I was to give up the defects of my childhood and so He withdrew its innocent pleasures. He permitted Papa, tired out after the Midnight Mass, to experience annoyance when seeing my shoes at the fireplace, and that he speak those words which pierced my heart: "Well, fortunately, this will be the last year!" I was going upstairs, at the time, to remove my hat, and Céline, knowing how sensitive I was and seeing the tears already glistening in my eyes, wanted to cry too, for she loved me very much and understood my grief. She said, "Oh, Thérèse, don't go downstairs; it would cause you too much grief to look at your slippers right now!" But Thérèse was no longer the same; Jesus had changed her heart! Forcing back my tears, I descended the stairs rapidly; controlling the poundings of my heart, I took my slippers and

placed them in front of Papa, and withdrew all the objects joyfully. I had the happy appearance of a Queen. Having regained his own cheerfulness, Papa was laughing; Céline believed it was all a *dream!* Fortunately, it was a sweet reality; Thérèse had discovered once again the strength of soul which she had lost at the age of four and a half, and she was to preserve it forever!

[45v°] On that *night of light* began the third period of my life, the most beautiful and the most filled with graces from heaven. The work I had been unable to do in ten years was done by Jesus in one instant, contenting himself with my *good will* which was never lacking. I could say to Him like His apostles: "Master, I fished all night and caught nothing." More merciful to me than He was to His disciples, Jesus *took the net Himself*, cast it, and drew it in filled with fish. He made me a fisher of *souls*. I experienced a great desire to work for the conversion of sinners, a desire I hadn't felt so intensely before.

I felt *charity* enter into my soul, and the need to forget myself and to please others; since then I've been happy!

Introduction to the text:

Thérèse of Lisieux turned fourteen shortly after this event she recounted. At Christmas, she experienced a full recovery from a hypersensitivity that had wounded her life since the death of her mother when Thérèse was aged four and a half. Her temperament changed: she became shy, a little withdrawn. Hypersensitive, she cried for nothing and then cried again because she had cried! Nine years later, she evoked this foundational event that we often call "the grace of Christmas".

The "four little angels" are Hélène, born October 10, 1864, died February 22, 1870; Joseph-Louis, born September 20, 1866, died February 14, 1867; Joseph-Jean-Baptiste, born December 19, 1867, died August 24, 1868 and Mélanie-Thérèse, born August 16, 1870 and died October 8, 1870.

"Bientôt" [*soon or speedily*] (Ms A, 44r): a favorite word for the impatient Thérèse (218 times in her writings). Already in 1895, Thérèse thought she was going to die soon; in February 1895, in her poem "*Vivre d'Amour*" [Living on Love] (Poem 17), she wrote: "For I sense my exile is about to end!....".

"My extreme sensitivity" (Ms A, 44v): this childlike sensitivity was to remain underlying throughout Thérèse's life, judging by the number of uses of the words *crying* or *tears*.

"The delights of the Holy Trinity" (Ms A, 44v) [ICS p. 97]: the word *delights* is a strong word for Thérèse to designate the happiness of God, the happiness he gives and the happiness he feels.

"To run as a giant" (Ms A, 44v): Thérèse also used the expression in a letter to Céline on 25th of April, 1893 (Letter 241).

"Jesus had changed her heart!" (Ms A, 45r) [ICS p.98]: Céline confirmed in the Process: "I witnessed this sudden change and thought I was in the middle of a dream, when, for the first time, I saw her completely master a pain that

would have previously left her desolate, she was cheering up my father with a lovely grace. This change was decisive; after that, never again was she dominated by the shocks of her sensitivity".

"To work for the conversion of sinners" (Ms A, 45v): Céline went on to declare in the Process: "This transformation was not limited to the mastery of herself, but it was seen, at the same time, that her soul flourished and was exercised in the practices of zeal and charity. She dreamed of the salvation of souls and worked ardently and generously for the conversion of sinners".

For the community dialogue:

1. *What does the text say?* Understanding the content and primary meaning of Thérèse's text.
2. *What does the text say to us today?* Grasping the relevance (social, ecclesial, spiritual...) of the text.
3. *What does the text say to me / us?* Making relevant and applying the text to personal and community life.

The purpose of doing things in this manner is to allow Thérèse to speak to us, to question us, to encourage us, and to welcome her to shed light upon and confirm our personal and community journey. The questions proposed are therefore only indicative and can possibly accompany personal meditation and community sharing.

Questions:

1. Thérèse, when faced with her scrupulous illness, prays to her brothers and sisters who died in infancy. We can wonder about our relationship with all those who have gone before us. How do we live this communion of saints, pray for them and pray to them?
2. In what sense does this represent a conversion for Thérèse? Can we share any conversion experienced during our own spiritual journey?
3. To deepen the study of this conversion, we can list the effects of Thérèse's experience. What essential fruit emerges in her relationship with Christ, fruit that will not cease to deepen afterwards? (See in particular the Offering to Merciful Love, the parable of the little bird, the discovery of the elevator...). We can also read in parallel Letter 201, where Thérèse offers again her interpretation of the Christmas grace to Father Roulland.
4. How does this testimony of Thérèse invite us to live out our own relationship with Jesus?.

Prayers for April

Thank-you, Lord, for all the blessings you give us each day.

We pray for:

- Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, Archbishop Paul, SM, Bishop Michael, and all our priests, religious and seminarians
- Our Provincial, Fr John Grennan, OCD, our General, Fr Miguel Márquez Calle, OCD and all our Carmelite family, especially our Carmelite Sisters. Also, vocations to Carmel and to our own Peace of Christ Community **(Please offer a decade of the rosary daily for this, as requested by Bishop Greg Homeming, OCD.)**

Special Intentions:

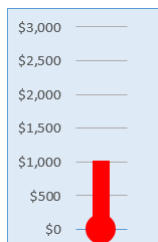
- Our Ukrainian Carmelite nuns, friars & seculars, and all the people of Ukraine, suffering from the terrors of war
- Our Carmelite nuns in Aleppo, and all those suffering from the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey
- All those affected by the floods in New Zealand
- Fr Jérôme, OCD and our Goma mission
- Fr Michael-Thérèse, Fr Antoine and CSJ
- Fr Philip, CSJ and the University Chaplaincy Team
- Our Special Members, especially Margaret, Dorothea, Stephanie, Rosaline & Peb
- John Paul II Centre for Life and prayers for life
- Those who have died recently and the consolation of their families
- Those who have asked for, or need our prayers, especially Fr Arsène, Fr Deeney, OCD, Mary (for a good recovery), Peb's daughter, Louise Martin (dying of cancer), Megan's mum with Covid, and Megan caring for her mum

Our Holy Father's Intentions for April:

- We pray for the spread of **peace and non-violence**, by decreasing the use of weapons by States and citizens.

OUR MISSIONS PROJECT

To help Fr Jérôme, OCD in assisting the displaced children in Goma, due to terrorism



New Total



Displaced people and children living in makeshift shelters

Our April Carmelite Saints

17 Mon. Bl. Baptist Spagnoli (priest)

18 Tue. Bl. Mary of the Incarnation (Barbe Acarie) (nun)



St Zélie Martin esteemed Madame Acarie's generosity and exemplified it in her own life.



Visit of Fr Sin Wee Chin, OCD from Taiwan

THE BROWN SCAPULAR OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

The Scapular is essentially a "habit". Those who receive it are associated in varying degrees with Carmel and dedicated to the service of Our Lady for the good of the whole Church.

Our Tradition shows the firmest conviction that the habit and the Scapular have no salvific effect unless we see their meaning as Mary's habit which affiliates us to the Carmelite family, and we live according to her example. The central truths to be pondered include Mary's protection, her intercession at the time of our death and beyond it.

The Scapular is one of the treasures of the Carmelite family. When we speak of the Scapular, we should emphasise belonging to the great family of Carmel... If we are to be clothed in Mary's habit, we should strive also to be clothed in her virtues. The Scapular is one of our means of directing people to Mary and thus to her Son.

The Seal of Carmel: "Zelo zelatus sum pro Domino Deo exercituum"

"With zeal have I been zealous for the Lord God of hosts"